



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-03-016

March 26, 2003

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NRC SPECIAL INSPECTION INTO ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS AT PALISADES PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection into the circumstances surrounding two recent electrical problems at the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant at Covert, Michigan. The plant, operated by Nuclear Management Company, has been shut down for refueling since March 16.

Both problems led to an Alert being declared by the utility under its emergency plan. An Alert is the second lowest of four emergency classifications.

On Tuesday (March 25) the plant lost its connection to offsite electrical power sources. The plant's two emergency diesel generators started automatically to supply electricity to important plant safety systems. The diesel generators continue to supply power while the utility investigates the cause of the loss of offsite power and makes necessary repairs. Both diesel generators are operating, although one is sufficient to supply power to the reactor shutdown cooling system and other safety equipment.

The earlier Alert occurred on March 18 when a circuit breaker at the plant failed and caused a fire that was confined to the circuit breaker. There were no injuries caused by the fire.

The NRC inspection team includes three inspectors from the Region III office in Lisle, Illinois, assisted by the two resident inspectors assigned to the Palisades plant.

The report of the inspection will be publicly available when it is issued, about 30 days after the close of the special inspection. The report will be posted on the NRC web site in the ADAMS electronic reading room: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> (To locate the report, once it is issued, enter the docket number for the Palisades plant (05000255) in the search phrase box.)

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